

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 82nd AUTUMN DELEGATE MEETING  
HELD ON 11th and 12th OCTOBER, 1986

(To be read in conjunction with the EC Report to ADM and the Agenda for ADM)

<u>ATTENDANCES:</u>	<u>No. of Branches Represented</u>	<u>No. of Delegates Sitting</u>	<u>Branches Not Represented</u>
<u>Saturday, 11th</u> <u>October: 1.15 p.m.</u>	15	26	Bournemouth, Eccles, Glasgow, Hammersmith, Seaham, S.Yorks, W. London
<u>Saturday, 11th</u> <u>October: 4.05 p.m.</u>	17	32	Eccles, Hammersmith, Seaham, S. Yorks, W. London
<u>Sunday, 12th</u> <u>October: 10.40 a.m.</u>	17	27	Eccles, Enfield & Haringey, Seaham, S. Yorks, W.London
<u>Sunday, 12th</u> <u>October: 3 p.m.</u>	18	29	Eccles, Seaham, S. Yorks, W. London

FINANCIAL REPORT:

£

Income

Collections: Saturday 48.70  
Sunday:  
a.m. 39.62  
p.m. 18.12

SATURDAY: There was one nomination for the Chair - Com. G. Slapper by Bolton Branch, and Com. Slapper was appointed 16 votes to 0. Letters of apology for late Forms 'C' were to hand from Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh and verbal apologies were given by delegates from Bolton and Lancaster. It was agreed that delegates from these branches could sit. It was also agreed that Standing Orders Committee act as Tellers. Because the member concerned in Item 1 was going to arrive late, delegates agreed to deal with item 2 first.

Agenda Item 2(a) Graham (Bristol): Is Rule 33 procedure best one? Member has to wait after charge until next Conference or ADM - member is in limbo until it is dealt with, souring the atmosphere for the Party - produces an unconstructive atmosphere. Branch wants to consider change of rule so a charge could be dealt with at a specially summoned meeting, and the possibility of another type of sanction against a member rather than expulsion - suspending or issuing a reprimand.

Howell (Guildford): We should consider whether entire Party should be assembled and consulted whenever a member has to be disciplined. Its all right while we are 600. Should perhaps be by a committee or by an EC - this would have to be borne in mind when voting for EC members. Should consider limiting the damage to the Party this activity presents.

Johnson (Swansea): The reason is that members can put their case to Conference and the Party as a whole - part of our democratic procedure. Would be giving a lot of power to a small group (EC) to decide who should be members of the Party.

May (N.W. London): We have only had about 2 charges in past 10 years - it doesn't keep members out of the Party. Proposed change would be undemocratic. The particular change being dealt with today has been around since Conference and any result will



go to a Party Poll and that result won't be known until possibly after Christmas. Such member has been out of activity for about 9 months. A member may be a speaker whose speaking could be totally separate from the matter under charge. Perhaps rule could be changed to speed things up and relieve the member of the blanket charge on his or her general activities in the Party.

Item 2(c) Guildford: R. Cox - Proposals would increase representation on the EC. Johnson (Swansea): Proposal (i) would be detrimental to the administration of the Party (ii) would enhance it. EC not getting a quorum because not sufficient members on the EC. (ii) should see nominations increasing for the EC if there was change of date of meeting.

Dowsett (Islington): (i) Would add to the proliferation of committees.

Graham (Bristol): Should be more non-London members on EC but recognise difficulties whenever you pitch EC meetings. Alternative is to consider how much decision-making could devolve onto branches - appointment of representatives in debates...

C. Slapper (Newcastle): Favour more participation of members outside London - day suggested is Saturday for EC meetings to make it possible for members from a distance to take part.

General Secretary: Should ascertain whether members living as far away as Newcastle or Glasgow would be prepared to stand if the day was changed. Points made by Bristol worth considering - lot of work already relieved on vetting of pamphlets etc.

R. Cook (Birmingham): Is it necessary to approve bills like LEB on the EC?

Price (Central): In favour of EC meeting on weekend days: could not get home after EC meetings as at present run. Members willing to stand are prevented now because of travel difficulties.

Item 2(d) East London: McDonald Should use full name of the Party or the abbreviated Socialist Party of G.B. so there is no misunderstanding who we are.

May (N.W. London): Branch has had correspondence and disagreement with EC ruling after the 1986 Conference resolution. Conference gave no guiding principles to the EC on use of the name so EC made rulings. Branch used full name in advert and EC rightly took us to task. We then used another advert with full and abbreviated name but EC and one or two branches took branch to task. Recent S.W. London leaflet had the incorrect use. Why has N.W. London been got at? To stop the branch from using the full name is wrong we are going to move a resolution.

Usher (S.W. London): Conference said use The Socialist Party wherever appropriate. Lose way of putting it. No-one regards the Labour Party as the socialist party. If the Labour Party hi-jack the name again we are going to lose it. Should make an unequivocal stand and call ourselves the Socialist Party, retaining full title for legalistic reasons.

Coleman (Islington): Concerned about delegates who have obsession about the Party's name - terms of their case is religious. We are the Socialist Party and last Conference decided wherever convenient in propaganda to use that name and that's why it was an instructed resolution. Not particularly happy about some of the EC's guidelines. Can't have one branch using that and another SPGB because it looks as if there are two parties. It has to be standardised through democracy. This ADM has no powers to overturn decision.

Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Needs commonsense and patience to work out sensible formula. Started about 20 years ago when the then Publicity Committee sought to regain the name the Socialist Party and stop some newspapers using the term for the Labour Party. There's no real problem - SPGB in formal sense - SP in adverts.

Cook (Birmingham): If both titles used in advertising amount of confusion is immaterial. If EC rulings inadequate instead of disobeying their ruling, could have asked EC to reconsider its ruling.

Graham (Bristol): Conference resolution hopelessly unspecific and will only be cleared up by instructed resolution at Conference.

Moss (Swansea): EC out of order to draw up list of where name should be used: where branches found it appropriate to use one name or the other they should do so. Won't get conformity with complicated set of rules EC has drawn up. Leave it to branches.

C. Slapper (Newcastle): It is an issue because there is a progressive force to change and another regressive force not to change. Essential to stick to guidelines until Conference reverses them. EC effectively asked to lay down framework for implementation.

Howlett (Camden): No evidence that voting last year to keep Party's name was just for legal reasons. That name is on every publication and there is no confusion.



Valor (Glasgow): The common usage whatever you decide that to be, should be accepted. In Glasgow posters up with 'the Socialist Party' on and they are not the SPGB's meetings. We have to decide what is useful.

P. Lawrence (EC): Conference resolution used words 'official party policy' so EC felt they had to draw up a ruling. Only contention about one part was whether to use the socialist party or the SPGB in advertising meetings etc. and DM should decide. EC wanted some consistency seeing different usage in adverts in the Guardian. EC would accept any modification made today.

Hopwood (S.W. London): Some adverts don't give address of HO for SP information.

Begley (Islington): Essence of Conference resolution was not to use 'of Great Britain' anywhere and EC was wrong. It is a fetish that full name must be used everywhere.

RESOLUTION - May and Davies (N.W. London): "That this Delegate Meeting recommends that in media advertising the name The Socialist Party only be used when the full name of the Party appears in the text."

May: The full name stands for 80 years of socialist propaganda ideas. The name The Socialist Party means absolutely nothing. Party is known for its attitude to war, reforms etc. and many people in this country are aware of this. Other people will say the Socialist Party is the Labour Party. EC toldbranch the guidelines will apply until DM says otherwise. Prior to Conference a number of sub-committees were already using the Socialist Party. Three branches which have issued leaflets in defiance of the EC's ruling have not been taken to task - a bit unfair. Members worried about losing out on money left in wills as someone may take over the name and get the money.

RESOLUTION LOST 6 - 18

RESOLUTION - Howell and R. Cox (Guildford): "This Delegate Meeting recommends that for advertising meetings and general publicity, the name of the Party to be used shall be The Socialist Party."

Howell (Guildford): The public find it very confusing to find adjacent adverts in the Guardian referring to The Socialist Party and to The Socialist Party of Great Britain. Full name has nationalist overtones.

Cook: We should be able to take issue with anyone who uses The Socialist Party because we are the Socialist Party.

May: I take this resolution to mean all leaflets, media advertising etc.

Howell: Yes, newspapers, posters and handbills.

L. Cox (EC): 'Great Britain' has diminishing impact of 'the Socialist Party' part of name.

Coleman: EC guidelines not good enough. Our propaganda directed to young people in particular and the Great Britain bit is doing harm.

McColl (Bournemouth): I was one who tried to change Party's name. As long as we have the name it will be a danger but if it is the name we should use it.

Davies (N.W. London): I was 20 when I joined and we had the same arguments then about the name of the party.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 17 - 10

Agenda Item 1 - Charge against Com. C. Skelton under Rule 33:

A. Atkinson for the EC: In addition to what the EC has circularised is a statement from Guildford Branch and Com. Skelton's statement in her defence. The charge was initiated by the EC and attached was a letter from Com. Skelton subsequently regarded as an apology but the question of her apology was not considered for the EC to consider and the rescindment of the charge was rescinded on 13th May. The EC was unaware of Com. Skelton's activities until Conference. Correspondence had been addressed to the General Secretary and not the EC. Only when Guildford Branch considered they had not had an apology did they take it up at Conference. Com. Skelton considered Guildford Branch was not qualified to deal with a Form 'A'. Com. Skelton's activities have directly resulted in the demoralisation of a member previously active who has now withdrawn from activity. She preferred to contact a hostile political party rather than discuss the matter with Guildford Branch. Her activities show a contempt for established and proven democratic precedents in the Party.

C. Skelton: At the earliest opportunity I wrote to Com. A. and to Guildford Branch that if what I did had hurt him in any way I was very sorry. I regretted any distress. Guildford had not asked me to apologise to the branch in January. Their letter arrived just before Conference saying I must apologise to the branch. I think they



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C. Skelton: At the earliest opportunity I wrote to Com. A. and to Guildford Branch that if what I did had hurt him in any way I was very sorry. I regretted any distress. Guildford had not asked me to apologise to the branch in January. Their letter arrived just before Conference saying I must apologise to the branch. I think they



misconstrued and misunderstood what I was about when I wrote on January 1st. I did not offer gratuitous advice but asked for information. Why did I enquire amongst his previous associates in the Labour Party was my experience interviewing people. If I had had a hunch about Com. A and written to the branch enquiring, they could have brought a charge against me because of a Conference resolution in the 70's that members making unsubstantiated charges against a member could be charged. Another reason is that Militant Tendency is known to operate in a devious way - members have been known to join other organisations and conceal the fact that their members are members of MT. Com. A came back from attending the Labour Party Conference and immediately decided to quit it. That suggested to me he was probably a supporter of the Militant. I did not know he had been in close contact with Guildford Branch prior to this conference or intended leaving and joining the SPGB. I did not know that he was speaking at the Labour Party conference about socialism - that it was with Guildford's blessing. I am out of touch with the branch. Lot of misunderstandings in this matter and I would suggest that it would be advisable not to prejudge the issue but consider what is the Party's overall interests. Conference resolution uses the term potentially damaging to the Party's interest - I don't understand the wording. It's catch-all phrase. I hope you won't press a charge against a member for an isolated action for which I have apologised. Shattered that members thought I had gone to the member's employer. He was told about his political activity in November. No way could any action have been taken against him as a result of anything I did.

Cook (Birmingham): The member shows no recognition even now of what it was that was wrong. The member seems to have assumed it was her right and duty to enquire about other members - it doesn't matter whether it was an employer or previous political party.

Garr (Bournemouth): Why question an application because they were formerly a member of Militant Tendency: people who join the the party were often previously members of all sorts of organisations. Naive if she thinks it Militant policy to infiltrate a Party of 600 members.

Skelton: Important to enquire because when I phoned the General Secretary to enquire it was because I was being asked to vote for the member on the EC and the Form A said only that he had been a member of the Labour Party. I wanted to know if our Form A is suitable to these conditions. Should we not ask whether people have been a supporter of other political organisations and ask branches to fill in the fullest information for the EC to be fully informed.

Percy-Smith (Bristol): Skelton still has not seen the point. When applicant submits a Form A and is asked questions, if the members are satisfied applicant has accepted and understood the Party's case they are accepted for membership on that basis only.

C. Slapper (Newcastle): Nothing new has come up on the statements made today and I think members of Newcastle branch would not have changed their views. It was clear view at Conference and it was trying to help the EC by interpreting Rule 33. I don't believe we are particularly interested in apologies except for future actions. Skelton never really changed her position but acknowledged the feeling expressed at Conference. All her statements since have made things worse rather than better.

Coleman (Islington): No-one in the Party to get people out. Nothing I have heard so far has made me change my mind. I have never known such a despicable action as the one taken by this member. Com. A a year ago was working hard in the Party - now he doesn't want to look members in the eye and that is because of what Skelton did. What would an infiltrated Militant do in the SP. We are committed by our principles to hostility to other political parties - you do not collude with our political enemies in a campaign against a member of the Party. This is the most diabolical act I have ever heard in the Party's history and she should be out of the Party because of the reflection on the name of the Party. She should have done the proper thing and resign.

Donnelly (Glasgow): Guildford did not think fit to let the Party know what it was about. It is also retrospective. A member has committed an act which the Party now say is in error: she accepts the ruling and apologises and wants to get on with the job. We have given her a row - let's leave it at that.

May (N.W. London): Endorse Donnelly's remarks. Would have thought it behoven on the General Secretary to put the letter addressed to him before the EC. Guildford's



letter also sent to the General Secretary did not get to the EC table. Apparent there are a number of members who as far back as Conference wanted Skelton out. Are you laying down a principle that once a person becomes a member of the Party you can ask no questions about his previous activity from friends. If so you won't be able to ask about an applicant's previous affiliation or past. Are you saying I can't ask a member's friend about that member's former political activity.

Cottis (E. London): Should recognise people make mistakes. Com. Skelton has been in error and she has admitted it and says she has no intention of going against the Conference ruling. Got to reprimand her but here is a comrade who has served the Party for many years and has previously shown no desire other than to work for it. She must be permitted to remain in the Party.

General Secretary: General Secretary's terms of reference are to maintain communication between branches, individual members and the EC. Both Guildford and Com. Skelton were persuaded by me to try to settle the matter without it coming to the Party. It was a hot potato which certain branches would have loved to handle and in the interests of the Party I tried to prevent what has now happened.

Moss (Swansea): Branch was satisfied with Com. Skelton's letter which contained the apology. Her latest circular has done her harm and says she has got nothing to apologise for. Would like her to say more specifically that she apologises and will not do this sort of thing again.

RESOLUTION - Coleman and Dowsett (Islington): "That a Party Poll be conducted in accordance with Rule 33 on the question 'Should Com. Skelton be expelled for action detrimental to the Party in view of the case against her leading to a charge by the 83rd E.C.' and that in the opinion of the ADM 1986 Com. Skelton should be expelled."

Hopwood (S.W. London): When did Skelton decide she had done wrong - she knew she had upset a member, the General Secretary was full of disquiet and yet she continued in the same action by sending a further circular concerning other party members full of lies. She referred to an isolated act but it seems she would have continued doing these isolated acts before someone had picked this up.

L. Cox (EC): It is not about an isolated instance but a series of behaviour. She should have made enquiries of the branch first to have proceeded otherwise is what members of this democratic party do not do. Branch could probably have resolved these questions. Questions about an applicant's past can occasionally be asked, but openly by the branch concerned not by an individual member secretly, and if not possible through a branch i.e. Central - it should be through the EC so it is open and above-board.

Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Most important thing is that one of our principles has been subverted in that a member of the Party has approached our political opponents in direct contravention of the Dof P and that the comrade maintains this is what she would have done and we would not have known about it had these enquiries not been proceeded with. We do not know what other enquiries have been pursued secretly of other organisations. If you do not deal with this sort of thing it can go on and you will have no control. Party has not been apologised to even if an apology would suffice. The whole way she conducted herself was totally undemocratic. Would have been better if she had said she would not embarrass the Party and waste its time and resigned. It is a matter of the reputation of the Party.

Howlett (Camden): Questioned connection between Com. Skelton's actions and the employer's warning to the member.

Howell (Guildford): We did not suggest it was an action of Skelton. No-one can tell when you throw a pebble in a pond where the ripples extend.

Coxall (Newcastle): Skelton shows no awareness that the Party has a democratic procedure for an applicant for membership. No role for one person to make enquiries about another and no role for such a person to be in the Party.

Price (Central): Com. A being disciplined by his employer was nothing to do with what Skelton did. There has been a series of coincidences though Skelton behaved unwisely and in an undemocratic, unsocialist manner. Should not spy on other members in any circumstances whatsoever. I believe she is a loyal member who has had this hanging over her for about a year - will have been through a trauma which she is not likely to forget. Unless proved otherwise in my book every Party member is honourable



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Howell (Guildford): Branch tried to prevent this trauma by referring to the matter at Conference as one of principle and did not refer to anyone by name until Com. Lestor spoke. Branch felt if Conference demonstrated its hostility to this action the member concerned would listen and apologise. Issue is secret spying on a member. Skelton says it was in secret. We should have a statement that it was wrong - not that the Conference or the EC thinks it was wrong - that is what an apology is and would indicate that Skelton has realised the enormity of her action, but she does not understand that so there is no possibility of an apology. This is indicated by her final letter which seeks to justify her action.

Coleman (Islington): Every member has the opportunity to vote on the matter. Three pertinent questions Skelton should address. Would she carry out a similar investigation again. Would she take the view that if she was not a long-standing member this would make any difference and that she should be expelled for this action. What does she think the Party ought to do to address itself to the grievance of this member.

Skelton (Central): I do apologise to the Party for any damage that my action inadvertently caused. Perhaps I should not have done it and I apologise to the Party for any action which may have damaged the Party, and I have done some stupid things before. My circular was intended to explain and clarify. It was confidential that telephone call to a Labour Party official as I was acting entirely unofficially - not wanting to cause distress to the member about whom I was making a little enquiry. I do not think anyone in the Labour Party would think any worse of this Party if we were careful of our procedures and our EC is properly informed about political antecedents of applicants. I openly sent a letter to the General Secretary for his information and I would have expected if there was a query about it that it would have been brought to the EC. Guildford Branch sent copies of correspondence to the Central Organiser but he did not bring it to the EC. I don't know what the Party can do about Com. A's distress. I think it should make some difference whether I was a long-standing member or not, whether a member has abilities to contribute to the Party. I have given assurances in writing to the EC I would not do this again - there was no official ruling that I knew I was going against. Now there is a ruling on the table and I do abide by Conference decision on such matters. I will give you every possible assurance in whatever form of wording.

#### RESOLUTION CARRIED 18 - 13

Agenda Item 3(a) McDonald (E. London): Mainly agreed with Bristol Branch's proposals. Interesting and important items don't get discussed. If branches mandated on amendments to rules chairman could just have the proposers to speak and nothing more.

Percy-Smith (Bristol) (Agenda Item 3(b): Circular distributed. Conference needs to be changed so that members can look forward to meeting to discuss ways of improving propaganda, literature etc. If delegates broadly agree they could indicate it and seek advice how any changes might be brought about.

General Secretary: Would suggest ideas be put to the EC to be circularised and ideas could be returned to Bristol Branch or at Conference and thrashed out there.

McLaughlin (Bolton): Item at last Conference re lack of a Saturday morning session though paid for. EC could act on this and could set up a plan to have Conference time structured, with certain resolutions coming up at specific times - expand Standing Orders Committee to half a dozen who would discuss how to arrange timetable. Items for discussion very important and don't come up.

L. Cox (S.O. Comm): There is on the Agenda 'Order in which items are to be taken' - it's in the hands of the Conference.

Davies (N.W. London): Important to have strong chairman. Members often out of order and speak too long. Used to get through the Agenda at Conway Hall. Branch reports very boring - should be written and circulated in advance.

Cook (Birmingham): With Agenda, proposed timetable could be sent out and branches would know what was coming up. Suggestions are excellent.

Davis (Newcastle): Difficulty of those travelling long distance - arriving in the small hours. Should be one session Friday afternoon, 2 on Saturday and 2 on Sunday.

Donnelly (Glasgow): Conferences are awful and favour any change to expedite it. Should start with Agenda item number 1 and go through all items. Does not need a real change or EC instruction but S.O. Committee could have a go. Should up-date our whole approach.

RESOLUTION Donnelly (Glasgow) and Cook (Birmingham): "That this ADM recommends that the EC change the 1987 Conference to run three days - Friday 11 - 6,



Saturday 10 - 6 and Sunday 10 - 5."

AMENDMENT - C. Slapper (Newcastle) and Moss (Swansea) "Delete 'Friday 11 - 6' and insert 'Friday 1 - 6'."

AMENDMENT LOST 8 - 14; RESOLUTION CARRIED 29 - 1

Coleman (Islington): Should ask what Conference is for. We should set targets and review them - if conference doesn't do that it will be tedious. Should have a one day conference and then transform the rest - members going into various sessions and discussing basic questions. Present format very combative - you have to vote for or against resolutions - people come to attack one another. On the second day those who are not interested in activity would not come along. At the end, the whole meeting reconvenes and sets targets and everyone comes next year and says if they have been achieved.

C. Slapper (Newcastle): Bristol have some good ideas - how do we get going - is it necessary to carry a conference resolution. Could ask Central Organiser to organise workshops through a floor resolution or ask Bristol to put ideas in an instructed resolution next Conference.

RESOLUTION - Graham and Percy-Smith (Bristol): "This DM recommends the EC to instruct Standing Orders Committee to structure Conference 1987 along the lines of Bristol Branch circular's proposal for a revised timetable."

Graham: Feeling seems to be Conference should be used in more constructive way without adversarial resolutions and sessions where members get together. Should give it a try but revert if it doesn't work out.

K. Knight (N.W. London): There is need to restructure Conference - instead of discussion on every resolution merely have discussion on propaganda, etc. and vote at the end - perhaps by card handed into S.O. Comm. Too much time spent going over the ground on each resolution.

Easton (EC): Workshops organised by sub-committees sounds good idea. Conference falls into five parts and the time could be split between the various subjects.

Howell (Guildford): Branch favours this kind of change.

C. Slapper (Newcastle): If the guidelines to be implemented accurately would demand radical revision of conduct of Conference with less time for instructed resolutions.

Coleman: Against resolution because proposition of N.W. London delegate is the way we should restructure conference. Subject by subject - those we feel strongly about we will talk about, and vote at the end.

Graham: Restructuring would encourage more positive attitudes at conference. S.O. will have 6 months to work something out with the sub-committees or get views of branches. Bristol intend their suggestions as an accurate model perhaps not in every detail.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 12 - 3

RESOLUTION - Knight (N.W. London) and Coleman (Islington): "This ADM recommends the EC to structure Conference where each area of activity is discussed completely, each opener for the applicable resolutions speak in order of the Agenda, delegates then contribute, and it is followed up by winding-up and a card vote."

Knight: This doesn't necessarily cut across Bristol's idea. You'll find out straight away if workshops work or not. Idea is to speed up Conferences, and don't keep going over same ground. You could give job of speaking on four resolutions to one delegate. This is system the large parties use - I'm not suggesting composite resolutions.

Coleman: This will make Conference more efficient and will allow delegates to choose what they will concentrate upon, and get on to the more important issues.

Howell: Related resolutions are often contradictory - might some form of compositing be necessary.

Graham: This might be incompatible with resolution just carried: would be open to delegates to change arrangement at the time.

McLaughlin: Opposed to second proposal. If we're trying to change Conference next year it might not work out - if there are two revolutions we won't know which one has caused the thing to fail. Stick to one change and see how it goes.

Cook: If Bristol structure worked well it will emphasise the constructive work we do. How do we get instructed resolutions into the slot. The two schemes are mutually assisting.



P. Lawrence (EC): Remember what happens is communication between ADM and the EC when resolutions are before the EC next Tuesday. Wording of second resolution not clear. I anticipate if carried the EC would have to go back to mover and seconder to be guided as to what they are saying.

Knight: Would be against compositing because you lose all the points put by individuals. This is where you are trying to accommodate ideas of different groups. No difficulty having periods discussing publicity rather than separate sessions on the subject. Party does things largely by trial and error. If they fail Party will learn. If EC need a statement I could draft one and Coleman could amend it etc.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 16 - 4

Agenda Item 3(c) Dowsett (Islington): Membership has demonstrated its dissatisfaction with the way Conference is organised. Members should be able to enjoy Conference and feel Socialism is one step nearer because of what has happened at the weekend.

Agenda Item 3(d) Graham (Bristol): Standing Orders have not been revised for more than 40 years. Branch idea is to tidy them up and we hope to present this as an instructed resolution next Conference. Have inserted a quorum a time limit for speaking, no right of winding-up on items for discussion, floor resolutions provided they arise from current business. Attempt to deal with some of the unruliness and uncomradely behaviour of conferences or ADMs: names to be recorded.

Goodman (Hammersmith): Generally in agreement. Persistently interrupting members should be sent out of the hall rather than have name recorded.

Donnelly: What is benefit of person not being able to reply to discussion. Always suspicious of floor resolutions at Conferences. Recording names of persistent interrupters won't work. As for the sin-bin - can you imagine the amendments - delete 10 minutes insert 15 minutes.

Hopwood (S.W. London): Names in Minutes don't work - names of members who don't return books to HO Library in Minutes don't work.

C. Slapper: Excellent draft but on moving Next Business is it necessary to add that this can't be used to prevent vote on instructed resolution.

L. Cox (EC/S.O. Comm.): Committee have been in communication with Bristol on this and are in agreement with the draft. On direction to chair (point 15) there may be a need for complex argument.

Davies (N.W. London): On item for discussion where points have been raised, opener should reply. Any opener should have more time and perhaps 5 minutes usually for a contribution - openers more if necessary.

Howell: Branch hasn't discussed this. It is not nice to have your name published. How are people to be sent out of the room. Could they have right to vote on any matter withdrawn for some time.

Knight: Disciplining will create more trouble - person will get more difficult. People present have said bad things - you just ignore them and get on with the job. Must try to build bridges.

Coleman: Opposed to naming members. Should not branches be more careful who they appoint as delegates or branches should try to change members' behaviour. People will listen more to their own branch than a conference. At this end of the room there is a constant murmur in my ear.

Graham: Branch not particularly committed to particular things in the draft and will amend in line with delegates' suggestions, but doubt if branch will drop idea relating to unruly/uncomradely behaviour. Not just Party members who are present. When I was General Secretary I had to read out letters of resignation from people who could not stand the bickering in the Party.

Agenda Item 3(e) Goodman (Hammersmith): Nothing really to add to our circular on branch voting and representation at Conference.

Moss: Weight of Party tradition against Hammersmith but in terms of democracy you can't fault that the number who vote in a branch should be recorded when votes are taken at conference.

Donnelly: Flaws in idea. Some members join Central Branch who have fallen out with their branch. Numbers would vary over period of weeks when discussion Agenda. Central branch members could be in a superior position to other members who attend branch meetings.



Knight: Ex-Central Branch Secretary - out of 200-odd members about 80 returned ballot papers. Large proportion would be older members moved away from London or young members from areas with no branch. Not many have just fallen out with their branch. It would be the most democratic thing you could do for Central Branch members - where every vote would count unlike the proportional voting now - it would stimulate members of branches to turn up.

Davies (N.W. London): Would draw attention of Master Form 'C' showing membership numbers and attendances at branches. Way we vote now is not democratic.

Wood (Central Branch Secretary): Central branch voting is one vote for every 10 votes. 8 votes to 7 is nil-nil. About one-third CB members vote which compares favourably with branch voting.

Howell: Voting favours the big battalions in the Party. On the other hand a vote arrived at as a result of discussion is a better vote.

Easton (EC): This has been moved before but it will have to be something a good deal better than this. You must either take an average attendance or say that only those members count who have attended the branch a certain number of times in the year - that's the logic of the matter. Conference discussions start in November not in March or April. It is nonsense.

Goodman: Average attendance could give an equally false picture. Members should try to get to the couple of special meetings to discuss the agenda - only the odd member who doesn't turn up once to have a say during the voting. Of course it's better to have a discussion rather than sit at home and then vote. Strongly recommend that we consider this.

Agenda Item 2(b) Goodman (Hammersmith): Reorganisation of function and responsibility of the EC suggested to help overcome the obvious reluctance of members in recent years to serve on the EC. Proposed 2-tier system to attend to policy, literature etc. and a smaller committee for day-to-day administration, as put forward in circular.

Moss (Swansea): For most of its history EC has been 14 strong. Party reduced the size and on occasions there have not been enough nominations. Two-tier system would lead to controversy about what each EC would be discussing. We want to get back to 14 and possibly get 10 or 11 nominations.

Cook: Size not same as consideration of function of the EC. Reverting to 14 would mean 14 members going through the chores of finance and general purposes which these proposals seek to rearrange.

C. Slapper: To avoid conflict terms of reference would be necessary. Rule Book has no definite statement whether EC responsible for discussing policy. Rule 14 refers to division having to be recorded on votes of policy or principle, but I don't feel generally EC should be discussing policy.

Knight: Branch not in favour of this - if we went back to 14 there would be wider representation. Personally convinced you need two sections - a finance and general purposes committee made of Party Officers for day-to-day running of the Party, who should be ex-officio members of the EC. The two groups would overlook each other's activities and meet every week.

Carr (Bournemouth) EC at present all come from London - shortly will have to be elected on a regional basis.

Howell: Finance and General Purposes Committee should be a sub-committee of the EC reporting to the main committee. Having fewer meetings would find more members from the provinces willing to attend and produce competition for places.

L. Cox (EC): re EC involvement with matters of principle, do delegates feel that the EC if called upon to interpret or take action arising out of principles or policy should have that authority.

P. Lawrence (EC): We have one set of minutes and administration is fairly efficient compared with having to do that twice in respect of two committees. Feasible to try to draw some distinction between general purpose items and policy items but amount of time taken up on existing EC with general purpose items is relatively small so the idea that you can hive this off and have a policy committee which need meet only four-weekly is very optimistic and I don't think this could possibly happen.

Goodman: This has started a discussion which was what we wanted. Possibly the second committee could be part of the first, but having the important part of the EC from all round the Party could mean better representation. Some of the bits and



pieces don't take up much time but sometimes interminable time. At the moment it doesn't work satisfactorily in terms of representation or in terms of the work the EC gets through - they sit late every week and that can't be right. Terms of reference can be drawn up. EC should be brought into line with our needs.

Agenda Item 2(g)/Treasurer's Report/Master Form 'C': Goodman (Hammersmith) Branches have cavalier attitude to central funding of the Party - too many lax about sending dues to HO - think it doesn't matter as there is money at HO. Should be greater responsibility towards the organisation as a whole.

Coleman: Branch agrees - members have to recognise responsibilities to the Party and the Party has to recognise difficulties of branches. Branch apologised to the EC and to the Party. Should go on to next business.

P. Wilson (Treasurer/EC): Real problem is not selling enough literature. I have not been as assiduous as I might have been notifying branches that they have fallen behind.

Agenda Item 5/Propaganda and Publicity: Simpkins (S.W. London): Why are monthly reports not being sent to the EC as per Propaganda Committee's terms of reference.

Coleman (Propaganda Comm.): Not able to do so and we write to the EC when there are matters to report.

General Secretary: Monthly reports are in their terms of reference. Sub-committees do not take cognisance of their terms of reference. Forms 'E' should be returned by branches so that monthly reports can be prepared.

Coleman: This Propaganda Committee is not doing this.

Simpkins: What about Lancaster, Macclesfield and other similar one-off meetings.

Hopwood: What follow-up is there for these one-off meetings.

Coleman: Report was put in and was on EC table. Members know more than they used to via the Central Organiser's newsletters.

McColl (Bournemouth): Strange members asking what is happening at these meetings - perhaps we should ask why we have branches holding no meetings. I trust socialists who organise those meetings. Should not demand value for money.

Coleman: Macclesfield meeting organised by Bolton and Manchester branches and fell on night England played in the World Cup.

Knight: Branches often try to get into new areas where there may be one member who doesn't know about Forms 'E'. Committee should ensure Form 'E' is completed.

General Secretary: Propaganda Committee should have 4 members: Forms 'E' gather dust at HO. I would be prepared to collate them.

Goodman: Used to have Master Form 'E' which gave idea of where propaganda was most used.

Agenda Item 5(a) Posters and Stickers - Begley (Islington): Branch finds it most effective way of getting known in the area. Need street posters and gimmicky lapel stickers.

RESOLUTION - Moss and Johnson (Swansea): "This ADM recommends that the Publicity Committee produce suitable car and lapel stickers."

Donnelly: Only half a dozen would want car stickers. We should have good blank posters.

C. Slapper: Suggest contact with WSP Belfast re posters for general publicity.

Howell: If stickers limited to members only would have no effect.

#### RESOLUTION CARRIED 15 - 7

L. Cox (EC): Can Central Organiser give up-date on Lancashire Branches situation.

Coleman (Central Organiser): EC some months ago informed of disagreement in the North West over meetings in Salford on top of the meetings of Manchester. EC asked me to arrange a meeting of all groups and a meeting will take place in November.

Agenda Items 5(b) and 6(c): Permission was given by delegates for Com. Easton to open for Islington: Party has no cause to be complacent about its attitude to South Africa. Have heard a member say our attitude has moved since the 50's where we used to say we are wholeheartedly in favour of the struggle for democracy where this does not exist but that now it has shifted to political democracy is all very well but what is important is the struggle for socialism. Too many members say you have to do one thing or another. You put the case to workers generally in S.A. and say do whatever you can to forward the case for socialism. Should cut across the question of race - there are no races - it is a non-question.

C. Slapper (Newcastle): Concerned that press statements have been somewhat inadequate in past - too vague or too specialised to each issue as it arose e.g. Solidarity in Poland. Not enough debate on these issues in the Party. Need to present a case which

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is highly practical in relation to the case for Socialism and not sound utopian.

Cook: Should be prepared to discuss this sort of thing in public meetings where to some extent we don't know the answer: we do know what we think about the class struggle etc. but what attitude we take to some of the happenings like a burning tyre round someone's neck. Party in past tried to be sure of everything and we have to come out and be vulnerable but be prepared to discuss it.

Percy-Smith: Can't always separate out the struggle for democracy and other issues this organisation are struggling for. ANC is struggling for democracy but also for state capitalism and is allied to the communist party. We take the risk of supporting organisations whose political objectives we cannot support.

Davies (N.W. London): Com. Easton did not say where we adopted a different line.

Demands for democracy and political rights always coupled with a political movement. Never been a pure movement for democratic rights themselves. Struggle for elementary rights must be joined to our struggle for socialism.

Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Question raised by Newcastle is one to which members should know the answer when they join. We should re-examine these questions but they go on and on. Socialism is not a paradise postponed but democracy realised so you can't separate socialism from democracy.

Coleman: We're talking about situations we are not in and we should have a certain amount of humility. One course of analysis is based on Marxism and the other based in the sectarian tradition which has a long tradition in this party. Workers find themselves up against material conditions and use what they can against these. The material solution is not decided at a conference or in a pamphlet but by the course of history and you can't predict it. ANC is nationalist and ANC not waiting for Party to say we support them. re the tyre round the neck - that is a contradiction of capitalism.

Knight: If we had backed the many movements in Africa we would have been behind dictatorships.

Howell: Many Poles using Catholic Church to advance their democratic rights and it is hard for us to criticise them. Democracy comes first within capitalism: have to accept it is always linked with reformism. Have to find some way of working for democracy within capitalism without supporting capitalist aims otherwise we shall lack credibility and always fit into this room.

L. Cox (EC): Do we support all struggles which claim to be for democracy because limited political democracy is a prerequisite for democracy - I think answer is no.

Easton: Should be able to say we don't know but we are not as vague about these questions as Cook says. An improvement in S.A. situation necessary but it is not for us to direct operations.

C. Slapper: We were aware of the established Party position but that there was a certain amount of disagreement and this should be aired and debated.

Easton (for Islington): Recent press statements have been sent out to newspapers but were not acknowledged or printed. There has been no press officer recently and there is inconsistency of production of press statements. Contact should be made with Press Association who will take statements. Should be branch press officers. Media Committee keeping an eye on this.

General Secretary: Previous press officers found the job unrewarding: Com. H. Weirs got good local press coverage. No-one has come forward since this.

Goodman: Need someone who can put out a punchy statement in way it is likely to be published.

Agenda Item 4 Party Literature (a) Begley (Islington): Have written to WBSmith with SS, WS Journal and Women and Socialism pamphlet. They would almost certainly accept our periodicals if they were same price as Marxism Today. Calverts have been approached re cost of part of SS print-run being produced to higher quality but this was very expensive.

(b) R. Smith (Islington): SS is not cost effective - no-one wants to say goodbye to 30p SS. Look at figures - £8,500 every 12 months. Unless we have an unending line of legacies we shall have to do something - price will have to go up.

(c) Donnelly (Glasgow): Branch members object to pp 12, 13, 14 of Women and Socialism pamphlet regarding viewpoint of Morgan and Engels. Viewpoint expressed in past was withdrawn by Party - wrong to appear now.

(d) Donnelly (Glasgow): Branch can't sell W.S. Journal - not sure what market it is



aimed at. Should consider its cost and return we are getting.

(e) Donnelly (Glasgow): Possibility of HO producing pamphlets similar to say The Strike Weapon - Lessons of the Miners Strike. Wish Party to have control of its own literature.

(g) Donnelly (Glasgow): Idea behind Escape was that SS too high-flown and this could be given away in pubs but it is the old thing the Party used to put out called an Election Special and the articles should be in the SS - not getting market it was meant for. Money being spent on it - are we getting what we want.

(f) Dowsett (Islington): SS excellent but appeals to certain type of worker. Need a tabloid to be put out as an experiment two or three times a year which takes a different form from Escape.

(h) Dowsett (Islington): Party doesn't respond quickly enough to many issues which arise.

Moss (Swansea): Branch view is that we should not continue to produce WS Journal as it is difficult to sell and not very attractive to read - resources should be concentrated on SS. Should have a glossy cover and perhaps in future be retailed through say WH Smith - perhaps increase price to 40p from 1st January 1987.

Knight: Opposed to having different types of SS. Experience is that when we go for commercial selling we get into trouble - large numbers being returned. Members should make greater efforts to sell SS. Drop all extraneous things. Perhaps pull-outs from SS as pamphlets. Women and Socialism read rather like a feminist pamphlet. Class issue not pushed hard enough - many generalisations without evidence. Should not have taken it out of the hands of the EC.

Percy-Smith (NPC): This pamphlet was edited in the old way by EC. All support printing pamphlets ourselves. Strike Weapon was very commendable. We want to see how things develop before jumping in with topical leaflets.

C. Slapper: Wish to give WS Journal longer to establish itself. Print-run has declined and sales have declined. 4(a) would need to be considered in relation to the World Socialist - could have better distribution particularly through shops. SS price should not be increased - Conference resolution that SS should be subsidised.

Usher (S.W. London): Opposed to two-tier SS and to increase price and nature of SS to tempt WH Smith. They will take the SS when workers want to buy it. SS should go up to 40p - we might in future have to increase it to amount people can't afford. World Socialist journal now being produced by HO at far less cost.

Cook: Smiths might be prepared to take collected Socialist pamphlets depending on binding. Disappointed with Escape - lack of an imaginative leap.

Goodman: Splitting print-run of SS not on. Think SS should be 40p. Escape is the paper of Hammersmith Branch of the SPGB which we offered to other branches who covered part of the cost and Guildford made a member from it. Wanted further issue for Fulham by-election but EC wanted it to go to all members. Have been scratching about for tidbits etc. - branches should have sent ideas, material and illustrations.

Howell (Print Comm.): Graph distributed shows cost variation according to numbers printed - you half the cost printing yourself. Technical details given of costs depending on type of production, some tasks we currently are unable to do. We could make the quantum leap in a few years' time.

Percy-Smith (Bristol/NPC): EC agreed text of Women and Socialism - I wrote initial draft. With regard to what Engels said about Iroquois Indians - basic argument of the pamphlet is not altered. Marx and Engels are not bibles - not infallible. Very unfair to put this on agenda without indication of what the particular point was about - being in Glasgow recently I discovered what these were otherwise would not have been able to prepare a reply. (Com. Percy-Smith gave an extended response to argument on anthropology etc.) Member who said it read like a feminist pamphlet clearly did not read it - also no evidence of underplaying of class.

Knight: Party position has been changed in this pamphlet but not the place to go into these matters.

Moss (NPC): There is no Party policy on anthropology unless you regard everything Marx and Engels said as Party policy but that is not the case. Wrong to say that an article by Crump was withdrawn or Conference rejected what he had said. Subject came up at EC in 70's but nothing raised at conference. Whole text of Women and Socialism presented to EC with an explanatory letter on the Engels material and this was accepted by EC.



Carr (Bournemouth): Idea of using Smiths is to get round a basic problem of going out and selling it.

Johnson (Swansea): Yet to see evidence of drop in sales with increase in price.

RESOLUTION - Moss (Swansea) and Usher (S.W. London): "This ADM recommends that the cover price of the SS be increased to 40p from January 1987 with a £6 annual subscription."

Donnelly: Opposed to increase and it does make a difference to sales.

C. Slapper: Conference resolution this year - this resolution contradicts - a conscious policy of keeping SS price down.

L. Cox (EC): Party's policy will still be to subsidise SS. Would have been £12,000 overspent last year were it not for legacies.

Moss: Advantages for raising price more than disadvantages.

RESOLUTION LOST 10 - 19

Agenda Items 6(e) and (f): Moss (Swansea): Will capitalism's armed forces be carried on into early stages of socialism as suggested by recent EC decision on a passage in Socialism as a Practical Alternative pamphlet. NPC edited text of this pamphlet and submitted it to EC - EC suggested one or two changes. NPC not happy with one change where NPC talked about socialism abolishing the armed forces - that socialism might need to use the armed forces in the early stage. Passage inserted by EC 'In the initial stage of socialism ....' NPC thought this not an accurate expression of the Party's case but EC would not alter it. Com. Buick wrote to the EC that the statement would make the pamphlet unsaleable and asked production (at HO) to be held up - EC refused. Party should not attempt to go into detail about hypothetical cases - this issue was incidental to the pamphlet and we think there is confusion on EC on the issue of recalcitrant minority and the use of capitalism's armed forces. The passage commits Party to hanging on to the armed forces until it is absolutely sure that socialism can run peacefully. Party position so far as NPC concerned is that in the establishment of socialism socialist society would have to take democratic steps to stop this - it may have to use violence - Party is not pacifist organisation. NPC asks delegates to say they don't want this form of words to appear. It could imply a short or medium term place for the armed forces and snacks of saying we may have to use the army at first but then hand over to civilian rule, the sort of thing a military dictatorship may say. Would like original text reinstated which said socialism will abolish the armed forces. Socialism will have no army no police force no coercion.

McColl: 1928 SS - Fitzgerald said socialist society in its first stages may have to maintain a standing army and it will be the workers who will decide.

Johnson: Difference between the state and the administration of things. Any minority who wants to persuade members of socialist society there should be changes are free to do so in a democratic way but if they are going to impose their view we have to defend socialism. What's point of obtaining political power without taking over the armed forces - capitalist class will say thank you very much.

Dowsett: Branch agrees with NPC and Buick. There will be no state in socialist society firstly for propaganda reasons. If we say we're organised to abolish the state but might have to keep it for a certain period not very convincing. State will have no place. The statement is open to misinterpretation. Could be seen to mean advocating Party setting up a workers' militia or some form of dictatorship of the proletariat. Process of getting socialism is now not when we get there.

Davis (Newcastle): If you have the armed forces existing as they do today in capitalism that necessitates a central state administrative system to administer them. Not prepared to go along with hypothesis that we may need to act violently but if we do we would do that in a socialist society on a community basis where democratic socialists organise to resist this kind of infringement. We are in business of making socialists and this statement will not make socialists. If I had read this statement when considering joining, I very much doubt if I would have joined.

Davies (N.W. London): Must point out that Clause 6 refers to the conquest of the powers of government, national and local in order that this machinery including these forces, may be converted.... The passage contains part of 1973 SS written by Buick, and statement from Is a Third World War Inevitable. Socialist society would have to defend itself. Think of all the odd people who go round planting



bombs. Would not we wait a little while. The people in the army are going to be socialists by then anyway. We will all be socialists and we will decide what will happen.

Donnelly: May be necessary to use armed force - in line with 1965 Conference resolution - don't try and change the Party's case bit by bit. EC have put this part in because it is in line with the Party's attitude and the D of P. If there is no violent minority we would disband the armed forces or use them for our purposes. You have got to hold the state machine and that is why in 1904 they put such emphasis on it to cut us off from the dreamy anarchists who held those views.

Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): EC's decision to go ahead with the pamphlet was quite undemocratic with ADM coming up shortly. It is one of the most important pamphlets probably the best we have ever done. We all agree that a minority will not be able to disrupt socialism but we need to work out a formula which expresses this.

Bennett (Manchester/NPC): The other members of the NPC have different view to mine but the EC's statement is incorrect and does not express the Party view. Important to realise when the use of the armed forces will be and how violence will be done by the socialist working class. My interpretation of clause 6 is that it refers to the changeover from capitalism. No contradiction in Buick's letter to the EC and the statement Com. Davies read out from Buick's SS article.

Howell: Strongly against the reference to the army as authorised by the EC. Armed force and the army not identical terms. To use force doesn't require an army. A standing army - highly authoritarian organisation - totally incompatible with what we mean by socialism. If we still have an army we don't have socialism. There have to be other ways of using armed force.

P. Lawrence (EC): One peculiar circumstance here that one party to the dispute, the NPC, is able to sit as delegates, move resolutions and vote on the matter. NPC's circular contains allegation that the EC's alteration to the pamphlet represents a radical departure from the established Party position and is instituting a change of Party policy. Neither EC nor pamphlet is saying socialism would maintain permanent standing army. Statement says there could be no long term place... Pamphlet deals with the resources which would become available once army abolished. We're dealing with the particular point when a socialist majority has captured political control. It doesn't say armed forces would be used - it even allows for armed forces being immediately abolished - it says a judgment would have to be made in light of circumstances. NPC doesn't give a shred of evidence for assertion that this is a radical departure from Party policy. EC is entirely consistent with every policy statement on this subject - it is even more cautious. The original pamphlet draft was sent to all branches discussed at conference and there was no argument on the section dealing with capture of political control. Draft passed to NPC who introduced the subject of the armed forces in its draft. Alteration would have committed Party to immediate abolition of armed forces and this is the new policy NPC have introduced and are trying to get ADM to endorse. EC compelled to alter this passage in line with Party position. NPC appears not to know what established Party position is and this is very worrying in a committee which is perhaps the most important one on literature. On no account should ADM endorse what the NPC ask - it would throw our case into confusion. If there is reservation about particular form of words no reason why it can't be modified as long as we don't adopt the policy being thrust on ADM. ADM could ask EC to prepare a fresh statement on the whole question of violence prior to Conference 1987 so there could be full discussion and a detailed report.

Carr: Party's position made clear in debate over the state that with the establishment of socialism the state could not exist. Can't be a stateless society but with an army. Don't see how we've got ourselves in this tangle. We should say there is no role for the army under socialism. How could a small minority get hold of all these sorts of instruments. Could there be some excuse why you have to retain the armed forces. Buick quoted as saying we might have to employ armed force. It's almost like some Leninist dogma that people are going to be in control of the armed forces.

Knight: NPC and EC should have met to discuss this. EC quite rightly recognised that this was a departure from the Party's position laying down dogmatically that the armed forces would be disbanded immediately. Unfortunately we have to speculate on



hypothetical cases. EC could only do what it did. EC did try and stay in line with Party's position and must be commended for that. The state is the capitalist class's executive committee - once we have established socialism the state disappears and hopefully the armed forces can go immediately. Society will look into the armed forces and reorganise them in the light of the circumstances and get rid of them.

C. Slapper (Newcastle): EC must answer question re request to hold up publication. Got to avoid utopian tendency to assume that on eve of socialist revolution there will be no significant resistance or that there would be hardly any army by that time. We should start to improve our grasp of the economics of change. Industrial action will almost certainly play some kind of role. By definition at moment socialism is established there can be no capital, no property, no state - these are capitalist concepts - abolition of state is not in question. Term state clearly incompatible with concept of socialism, but term State not identical with term force but that doesn't mean no armed force will not exist. It is not claimed the paragraph is perfect so we have to think about altering it to make meaning clear. Term long term dangerous - suggests it may be short or medium term (how long is a piece of string). Great changes will happen nearer the time of socialism - even with the army as shown in some countries.

Graham (Bristol): Com. Lawrence should not say EC members can't sit as delegates whereas members of a committee can. Should say why EC tried to get this pamphlet through in spite of its being on the agenda, letters going round Party etc.

Grant (EC): Did not vote to go ahead with pamphlet but not particularly happy with position EC stated in their amendment to that part of the pamphlet was the Party's established position although I don't agree that this is clear or correct but as an EC member I didn't impose my personal views on an EC decision. Don't think Party has assessed whole nature of violence in light of modern experience. You can't operate violence democratically. There has been a change of Party feeling as a result of the experience of second world war and the way it involved everybody.

Simpkins (S.W. London): Traditional Party position is that armed forces would be retained in early stages if they are necessary. I wouldn't have joined Party if I'd thought it a utopian organisation. We're opposed to coercion and violence but they are necessary in this society and if Monday brings a socialist form of society will these institutions still be necessary. If no longer required they can be abolished but if necessary they will have to be retained. How can we still be arguing this issue.

Ratcliffe (Edinburgh): It would not be safe not to dispense with the armed forces as now exist because it is for murdering people - if we say they will have to start killing our opponents it doesn't make sense. The army can't just be changed it would have to be thoroughly altered.

L. Cox (EC): EC resolution to hold up publication was lost. Abolishing the state doesn't mean abolishing everything that at present is part of the state. NPC say EC's version is wrong but they have not agreed on which quotation to try to prove they are right. Perhaps they could circularise that. We are talking about when socialism is secure.

RESOLUTION - Moss (Swansea) and Graham (Bristol): "This ADM recommends that the forthcoming pamphlet 'Socialism as a Practical Alternative' should state that socialism will abolish the armed forces and that there be removed from the pamphlet any reference to the use of the armed forces in socialism."

Easton (EC): NPC caused the trouble in the first place and the paragraph Com. Knight read out was reaffirmed by the EC last week. Best course is to remove all reference in this pamphlet - no need for it at all. Let's get rid of the Lawrence statement and the NPC's paragraph.

Moss (Bristol/NPC): Detailed report necessary and should be presented to next Conference. This statement should not appear in the pamphlet. NPC doesn't think EC thinks there will be a permanent standing army in socialism. Com. Lawrence's saying NPC is departing from Party's case because NPC's circular didn't quote examples - we wanted to keep it short. No need to use armed forces once you had got socialism. Not a traditional view that in early stage of socialism you would have to use armed forces. In From Capitalism to Socialism it said explicitly socialism would abolish the armed forces and this was endorsed by the EC. It is not holy writ - there are things which contradict and don't conform. Let's stick to the original idea in the draft presented to the EC and simply say socialism will abolish the armed forces. You must agree



that ultimately socialism will abolish the armed forces.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 18 - 6

Agenda Item 6(d) Usher (S.W. London): This was on Conference Agenda but not reached. Attitudes of black press talking about the race struggle - there is of course nothing but the class struggle and the Party's attitude to racism should be clear and unequivocal no matter who is propagating race ideas.

Dowsett: Clearly socialists are opposed to racism whatever form it takes.

Agenda Item 6(a): Easton (for Islington): Various areas which socialists need to keep abreast of and education classes could deal with these things and matters we are concerned with to improve our propaganda.

Agenda Item 6(b) Dowsett (Islington): Should emphasise our activity - what is needed to form a group or a branch. Sympathisers can participate and make a contribution. Breakdown the apprehension and myths about political parties. We should invite applications for membership wherever possible. New members in the initial stages are lost in the bureaucracy of the Party. There are points in the circular for discussion Party should think more seriously about trying to get back into the Party members who have left.

Devine (Edinburgh): I suspect one reason the Party doesn't have more candidates for Parliament is that we have to have members pass the elitist test.

Simpkins: People don't join the Party because they don't see socialism as a practical alternative. Some branches make tremendous progress and attract members in their locality.

Easton (EC): We should indulge in as many forms of propaganda activity as we can manage.

ADM ADJOURNED AT 6.10 p.m. following adoption of the EC's report to the ADM.